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October 5, 1982

Editor, Washington Post
1150 15th St. NW
Washington, DC 20005

Sir:

Old soldiers don't fade away any more. Like Maxwell Taylor (op ed page 10/5), they live to rewrite the history of their own disasters waiting to happen and to encourage new ones.

Some of the unfaded general's statements simply are not true. It is not true, as he says in his first two sentences, that in the Cuba missile crisis, USSR Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko denied the "presence" of "Soviet ballistics missiles being installed in Cuba." what Gromyko actually denied is that the USSR was supplying any offensive weapons.

To further this significant misrepresentation, the unfaded one, who was one of the majority of JFK's advisors who would have launched a war in that crisis, is untruthful in saying that to sove the crisis Khrushchev announced "that he would dismantle his offensive weapons..."

Khrushchev never admitted that any of the weapons the USSR gave to Cuba were offensive. Based on the precedent established by the unfaded generals, they were "defensive," their justification of our own similar missiles on the USSR's border in Turkey and at several points in Europe. Were ours defensive and theirs offensive?

The general has a purpose. We've had a peace of sorts since JFK agreed to Khrushchev's deal, but that appears not to satisfy the generals who thrice ignored JFK's order to remove our missiles from Turkey. (JFK did not learn this until he was deep in that extraordinarily dangerous crisis.) Because 20-year-old military airplanes are now "offensive" and not "defensive," the general tells us that the deal in which we guaranteed not to invade Cuba, his understatement of the reality, is of questionable "solidity."

Give them the chance that they'll get another war going!

The general endorsement of the performance of JFK's advisors also is unfactual. Actually, most of them urged military action, which meant war. He had to override them to avoid that war and establish the fear that has endured for two decades.

With most of a page of space the general said nothing about the USSR's possible motives in placing missiles in Cuba. This is consistent with his untruth that they were for "offensive" purposes. Yet to downplay the magnitude of the possible disaster, he says that for the USSR "the stakes were too small."

Aside from his apprehensions over our missiles on its borders, the USSR had a treaty obligation to defend Cuba from any attack. It is now well known that we were responsible for many attacks on Cuba and that more and larger ones were planned.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg